interministerial group under the Chairmanship of Commerce Secretary has been constituted to assess the impact of removal of quantitative restrictions and suggest suitable corrective measures.

Implications of WTO agreement on SSI

4550, SHRI R. S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared any strategy to check impending impact of the WTO regime on small and medium industries of the country especially in the matter of patents, copyright and trade marks;

(b) if so, the details thereof?

(c) whether Government have assessed the implicaitons of the WTO agreement on small and medium enterprises;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps proposed to counter the adverse effects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Government is constantly monitoring the impact of the removal of Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) and WTO Agreements on the economy including the small and medium industries in the country. Suitable legislative changes in Intellectual property (IP) Laws are aimed at meeting India's obligations under the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement and installing an effective system of IP protection and management.

(c) and (d) The removal of QRs have exposed our industries to greater competition. On the other hand, with the lowering of tariffs and the removal of QRs, our industries will be able to get raw material and other inputs without the hassles of Import licences and at competitive prices.

(c) Even after the removal of QRs protection to the industries is available in the form of raising custom duties upto the bound levels, imposing anti-dumping duties and taking safeguards measures in case of surge in imports. The Government have put in place several measures to help Small Scale Industries (SSIs) become globally competitive. These include special focus on areas such as technology upgradation, infrastructure assistance through cluster approach, timely availability of credit, adoption of modern management practices, use of electronic infrastructure and other IT applications to face the emerging challenges of trade liberaliiation. A comprehensive policy, package for the development of SSIs has been announced on 30th August, 2000. The policy package will enhance the competitiveness of SSIs through easier access to credit, availability of collateral free composite loan upto Rs. 25 lakhs, capital subsidy for technology upgradation and improved infrastructure.

SSI units in Andhra Pradesh

4551. SHRMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of SSI units in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) how many of them have been declared sick;

(c) how many workers and employees are engaged in these industries; and

(d) the measures taken by Government to revive the sick units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCLAE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) As per the information received from Government of Andhra Pradesh, the number of registered SSI units in Andhra Pradesh upto 31.12.2000 was 1,38,209.

(b) and (c) According to the Reserve Bank of India, which maintains information on sick SSI units, the number of sick SSI units in Andhra Pradesh as on 31st March, 2000 was 12,461. Data on workers and employees in sick SSI units are not maintained centrally.